

NAIS Key Components

The NAIS will be established over time through the integration of three key components: premises identification, animal identification, and animal tracking.

Animal Identification

To track animals as they move from premises to premises, animal health officials must have a standard way to identify them. Animals will be identified either individually with a unique Animal Identification Number (AIN) or, if they are managed and moved through the production chain as a group, with a Group/Lot Identification Number (GIN).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has amended the regulations to recognize for official use the 15-character AIN and 13-character GIN. Industry groups have the option of using the same animal identification numbers for programs they sponsor, such as for performance recording or breed registration.

By August 2005, APHIS anticipates it will be able to allocate AINs to tag manufacturers through a national allocator. More information about this roll-out will be posted on this page in the "Related Topics" box.

Animal Tracking

Various species working groups have suggested that certain basic events will trigger the need for reporting animal movements (e.g., change of ownership, interstate movement, multiple owners commingling their animals, etc). Each location will have a Premises Identification Number (PIN), and the responsible party will report the AIN or GIN of all animals that arrive at that premises and the date of their arrival.

There are essentially four pieces of information required to document an animal movement event. The table below shows the four pieces of information that will be stored in a national animal records repository:

National Animal Records Repository—Data Elements
Animal Identification Number, AIN, or Group/Lot Identification Number, GIN
Premises Identification Number, PIN, of the location where the event takes place
Date of the event
Event type (movement in, movement out, sighting of an animal at a location, termination of the animal, etc)

As it comes online, the NAIS will be a fundamental tool for carrying out animal health monitoring and surveillance programs. State and federal animal health officials will be able to access a centralized NAIS database continually, so that they may more quickly ascertain a herd's health status and issue intra- and interstate animal movement certificates. However, only information necessary for animal health officials to be able to track suspect animals and identify any other animals that may have been exposed to the disease will be maintained.

Eventually, the NAIS will allow animal health officials to identify all animals and premises that have had contact with a foreign or domestic animal disease of concern within 48 hours after discovery. As an information system that provides for rapid tracing of infected and exposed animals during an outbreak situation, the NAIS will help limit the scope of such outbreaks and ensure that they are contained and eradicated as quickly as possible.